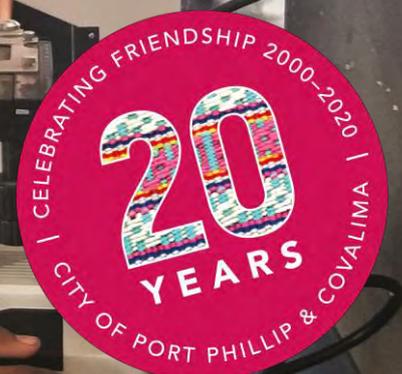


Friends of Suai/Covalima

Annual Report 2019/20



Contents

Message from the Chair	3
Strategic Goal 1 Strengthen capability and involvement in the Covalima community	5
Coronavirus response	6
Education and training	9
IT Social Enterprise.....	11
Scholarships and employment	12
Health	16
Environment and agriculture	17
Empowering women	21
Solar lighting projects.....	23
Land rights and advocacy	24
CCC partnerships and networks	25
CCC staff development.....	26
Strategic Goal 2: Practise good governance and management in our friendship.....	28
NGO capacity assessment.....	29
CCC financial management	29
Strategic planning	30
Strategic Goal 3 and 4	31
Suai church massacre commemoration	31
20-year anniversary celebrations	32
Community donations	33
Fundraising activities and events	35
Support for decentralisation of government.....	36
Financial report	37



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Message from the Chair

I am very pleased once again to present the Annual Report of Friends of Suai Covalima 2019-2020 and to outline some of the events of this year.

There are two things which stand out about this year: firstly it marks the 20th anniversary of this remarkable friendship between the City of Port Phillip and the District of Covalima and secondly, the onset of the global pandemic in 2020 meant that our plans and hopes to mark this significant anniversary were severely impacted in the second half of this year.

Much of our fundraising had to be curtailed as it was not possible to hold planned events, such as the trivia night and film nights, and plans for the celebration of the 20th anniversary, including an exhibition at the St Kilda Town Hall, had to be cancelled. It is not clear at this stage whether or not we will be able to hold these in early 2021.

We had planned to host a visit to Port Phillip in 2020 from the CCC Director Alberto Barros and CCC Commission President Amelia Amaral, to celebrate the 20 years, but of course this visit was cancelled, as were the 20th anniversary celebrations planned to take place in Suai, which some of us hoped to join.

On a more positive note, we did produce a commemorative 20-year booklet and have plans to launch this just after the end of the financial year, so a celebration will be held during the calendar year of 2020.

Here in Port Phillip, the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Suai massacre of 6 September 2019, held in the grounds outside the St Kilda Town Hall was a moving and fitting way to mark this tragic event.

And our committee developed a new strategic plan for the next five years, which will guide our work and will strengthen the future sustainability of our partner in Suai, the Covalima Community Centre (CCC).

In Covalima the CCC continues to play an important role in leading community actions. Some highlights of this year were:

- initiating a strong response on COVID-19 by providing health and hygiene information in Suai and to rural communities
- the continued development of the WithOneSeed forestry program, with 37 farming families receiving 10,000 small trees for planting
- several events marking women's participation and involvement in their communities including advocacy on prevention of violence against women

- scholarships for young people in Covalima continue to be awarded with a total of 17 students who graduated, 21 continuing their studies, and another 22 recipients commencing their studies in 2020
- a third Village Lighting Scheme implemented providing solar lighting for off-grid hamlets

We were proud to see that the CCC's action in moving quickly to respond to the threat of the Coronavirus was recognised by the Covalima District Administration, and it is a testament to the CCC's reputation and role in its community that it was invited to join the District Taskforce set up to deal with the COVID response.

I want to sincerely thank all our loyal donors and members who continued to support our work despite the difficulties this year caused by the Coronavirus. Like every organisation which depends on donations, we have been adversely affected by our inability to fundraise in the usual ways, but we are very fortunate to have people supporting us who continued to do so. Without you the work would not be possible. I also thank our Coordinator Carlene Harlock for her commitment and the way she has risen to the challenges posed this year, and last but certainly not least of all, thank you to the Council of the City of Port Phillip for your strong and continued support.

Megs Alston

Chair, Friends of Suai//Covalima Community Reference Committee



Friends of Suai/Covalima Community Reference Committee members at St Kilda Town Hall, February 2020

Strategic Goal 1

Strengthen capability and involvement in the Covalima community

The City of Port Phillip, through the Friends of Suai/Covalima, works in partnership with the Covalima Community Centre (CCC) to meet the aims and objectives of the Statement of Friendship 2010-2020 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the District Administration of Covalima and City of Port Phillip 2010.

The CCC is a vibrant, well-managed and inclusive community centre, and an important hub in Covalima providing training, support and connection for people throughout the district. There is a strong focus on inclusion and gender equality in all programs.

The vision of the CCC Strategic Plan (2016-2020) is to 'build a community in which everyone has the opportunity to develop their capacities and contribute to the social and economic development of the district of Covalima'.

The CCC receives core funding from the City of Port Phillip for costs of running the centre. Community donations from Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoSC) members and supporters fund a range of programs including education, health and reforestation. In addition, the CCC receives funding through partnerships with local and international NGOs to deliver programs.

This report includes an overview of all CCC activities in order to demonstrate the breadth of programs at the CCC and includes reference to the funding and partners involved.



The CCC team demonstrating social distancing at the Centre

Coronavirus response

Many programs and activities were disrupted from March until June 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed due to the State of Emergency declared by government during these months. All CCC partners and donors were flexible during this time and were able to reallocate program funds for COVID-19 related activities. This allowed the CCC to respond quickly to assist communities during this time.



CCC staff distributing information on Coronavirus in a village in Fatalulic sub-district

CCC COVID-19 taskforce and collaboration

The CCC were proactive in their approach to spread clear and accurate information as widely as possible throughout the district. This included visiting rural communities, radio messaging and organising a two-day campaign in Suai to share information. The CCC team initiated collaboration with the District Administration, Department of Health, Police Force and other NGOs to extend their reach to share information.

The CCC team created a taskforce to raise awareness on COVID-19 and health & hygiene practices. Working in small teams, they developed a plan to share information, resources and training in 130 sub-villages in 25 villages in Covalima district. Through their program partners, they received training on clear messaging, including WHO infographics to distribute. During the visits, staff distributed the WHO posters and soap, set up hand-washing stations and provided demonstrations and training on hand washing and safe practices. They encouraged communities to work with existing resources (ie. jerry cans) rather than purchasing new items.

In their planning the CCC staff carefully considered which team members should visit each sub-district, based on their already existing relationships within the villages and knowledge of local dialects. This was important to ensure that communities understand the WHO posters and could receive information and ask questions in the language with which they are most familiar.

The CCC team were formally invited to participate in the District COVID-19 Taskforce. This was great recognition for the CCC on their proactive response to the pandemic and their capacity and drive to support their community. As part of this taskforce, the CCC staff were able to travel freely throughout the district and worked in collaboration with other local NGOs and government departments. One of the shared activities was to install plastic water tanks for handwashing in public places around Suai.



Handwashing training starts early at the CCC

FoSC ongoing support

FoSC members supported the CCC with their plans and priorities by providing advice on simple messaging, communication methods and sharing experiences. The FoSC Coordinator communicated with partners to ensure that funds were directed where needed, without overlap between programs.

A COVID-19 appeal raised funds to support the CCC activities. FoSC purchased soap which was distributed to villages throughout Covalima. More funds are available for soap and hand sanitiser if this is required.

A Civic Health fund has been established to fund ongoing initiatives to promote health and hygiene. A training plan and manual is being developed for community training and health messaging will be embedded in all programs at the CCC.

Although cases of COVID-19 in Timor-Leste remain low, the land border between Covalima district and Indonesia continues to pose a threat. At the CCC, the staff have implemented safe practices around handwashing, cleaning and social distancing. They will continue to role-model behaviour, share information and provide training to communities.



The FoSC WASH project has ensured the Suai school community has access to running water and toilets

Education and training

English language and computer training

Trainers at the CCC deliver three levels of English training and computer training for three Microsoft programs (Word, Excel and PowerPoint). Many young people choose to undertake a combination of both. Enrolment fees for the English language and computer training generate income for the IT Social Enterprise at the CCC.

There were 83 students who commenced English training and 63 completions this year. This includes community-based training conducted in three villages.

There were 108 enrolments for computer training which took place at the CCC, the Covalima Youth Centre and also in Ainaro district. Overall, 68 students successfully completed the training.

Training completion numbers have been lower than expected because of disruptions caused by the global pandemic and State of Emergency. The team is anticipating increased numbers in the coming months.



Many young people attend computer training at the CCC

Suai Secondary School library and CCC Library

The Suai Secondary School library, established through FoSC, contains 4,105 donated books in four languages, including fiction, non-fiction and reference materials. There is also a collection of more than 125 pieces of science equipment which are regularly borrowed by biology, physics and chemistry teachers to use in the classroom. The library is well managed by two librarians who keep detailed records on the resources that are borrowed by teachers and students.

A small library at the CCC contains books, cassettes, DVDs and games. Most of these resources are in English and are used by the English teachers during training, and also accessed by CCC staff.



Students reading bookings in the Suai Secondary School library

Support for science and maths teachers

FoSC continues to provide support to local science and maths teachers in Covalima by funding training workshops. The CCC team has collaborated with a teacher group called Knua Pratika (village practice) and the District Education office to organise further training. FoSC provided funds for in-service training this year, however the training has been postponed due to COVID-19.

The Knua Pratika (KP) group borrow the science equipment from the Suai Secondary school library and have provided training to an enthusiastic student group called EPHA. In celebration of the International Day of Science and Mathematics, seven teachers from the KP group and 14 students from EPHA participated in a national science fair in Same district. Science equipment was borrowed from the library for these activities.



Students using the science equipment donated by FoSC

IT Social Enterprise

The InfoTimor Social Enterprise (ITSE) at the CCC continues to offer training opportunities for students and local organisations. Information on the number of students has been included earlier in this report.

Income is generated through the delivery of training programs and computers are sold at moderate prices to students and families. Laptops, desktop computers and accessories have been donated by City of Port Phillip for this purpose. Another shipment of donated equipment is planned for next year.

The ITSE team members have received training and support to monitor budgets and are successfully marketing their services widely to ensure the sustainability of the ITSE.

Scholarships and employment

Education is a strong focus of the friendship. The scholarship program encourages gender equity and provides educational opportunities for students from disadvantaged families. Scholarships are offered for students to further their education at senior secondary schools, vocational training colleges and universities in Timor Leste, with courses from 12 months through to four years in duration.

Scholarships are funded through FoSC fundraising activities and community donations, and the application and registration process are facilitated through the CCC. Scholarship opportunities are widely promoted, with the aim to reach students in remote communities and encourage them to apply. There is a clear policy for scholarship application, registration and selection and families are informed of the commitment required.

Integral to the success of the program is the pastoral care provided to the students during their studies. Many students are very young and must live away from home to study. This is an important consideration and care is taken to ensure students live together in appropriate accommodation and maintain regular contact with the Education Program Coordinator at the CCC.

In 2019, a total of 41 students received scholarships. The 41 students comprise 33 female and 8 male students, with fields of study including primary teaching, nursing, community development, agriculture, electrical studies, hospitality, administration and construction.

Of the 41 students, 17 students graduated in 2019, 21 students continued their studies in 2020 and three students withdrew.



Scholarship students practising their skills in general construction (left) and nursing (right)

Graduations in 2019

Two students graduated from CTC Salele vocational training school in Covalima with a Certificate 2 qualification. Both had completed a Certificate 1 in General Construction and then chose an area of specialisation. One student attained a Certificate 2 in Electrical studies and the other a Certificate 2 in Carpentry.

Five students at the Canossian Vocational Training Centre in Suai successfully completed their studies in 2019, with three young women attaining a Certificate 2 in Hospitality and two young women a Certificate 2 in Administration.

Ten students (seven girls and three boys) graduated after completing three years of senior secondary schooling at specialist schools in Maliana. Eight students graduated from the Maliana Agricultural secondary school and two from the Don Bosco Technical school.

Five nursing students completed their fourth year of nursing at UNTL, specialising in midwifery. The students were expected to graduate in 2019 but need to continue their studies to gain further practical experience and complete a research task.



Students graduating from Baucau Teachers College (left) and the Canossian Vocational Training Centre in Suai (right).

2020 scholarships

There are 22 FoSC scholarship recipients in 2020. This cohort includes 16 young women and six young men, with 16 continuing from 2019 and six new places offered to study primary school teaching, hospitality and general construction.



Scholarship recipients studying a Certificate 2 in Hospitality at the local vocational school in Suai.

COVID-19 impact on scholarships

After the State of Emergency was declared in March, schools in Timor-Leste were closed and students returned home. An exception was the Baucau Teachers College, and most students stayed in Baucau to continue their studies online. Schools gradually reopened in the middle of the year, with strict protocols around cleaning and social distancing.

During these months, students who are studying nursing, agriculture and community development reported to the Education Program Coordinator at the CCC that they were using their skills and knowledge to help their families and communities during their time at home. These activities including establishing hand washing stations, providing demonstrations of hygienic practices, talking about the importance of nutritious food for immunity and sharing information via social media.



CVTC Suai, the local vocational school, reopened after implementing COVID-safe practices

Employment and further study

Since the program commenced in 2012, 166 students have been offered scholarships. There have been 102 student graduates, and 27 students are still studying.

After graduating, scholarship recipients are encouraged to share information with the Education Program Coordinator at the CCC, so that FoSC can monitor employment outcomes or any plans for future study.

Since 2012, 71 students have reported that they have found employment or continued their studies. This accounts for over 40% of scholarship graduates, which is significant given the constraints on employment in Timor Leste. Many graduates are now working in Covalima district in local businesses, at the airport, in vocational training centres and with NGOs.

One 2019 graduate from Don Bosco Technical School in Maliana has been employed at the school as an assistant teacher. Graduates from the Technical school and Agricultural school in Maliana hope to continue their vocational training in Dili but did not have an opportunity to register in 2020.

Five graduates also applied for positions with Timor Resources in Covalima however the processed has been delayed due to COVID-19.

Health

WASH facilities at Suai Secondary School

The FoSC-funded water, sanitation and hygiene project at Suai Secondary School is providing a sustainable water supply and toilets for more than 2,100 students, and local families in nearby communities are now connected to the community water tank.

The Suai Secondary School Principal has confirmed that the water at the school is still stable and the community are accessing the water without problems. A WASH Committee consisting of teachers, representatives from the Parents Association and local communities has been formed to oversee the collection of funds and expenditure to maintain the facilities.

FoS/C and the CCC have an ongoing commitment to encourage health and hygiene training at the school and in the wider community, and a Health Program Coordinator at the CCC is employed with FoSC funding to facilitate training and monitor WASH facilities at the school and Centre.

Health and hygiene training

On March 14, the CCC Health Program Coordinator organised health and hygiene training for 163 students and five teachers at EBC Sandalo school. The training was facilitated by Sister Gilbert from the Maucatar Health Clinic. During the training Sr Gilbert distributed 98 Days for Girls menstruation kits, including soap and small towels. The training had a strong focus on handwashing and ways to prevent transmission of disease.



'Days for Girls' menstruation kits were distributed to students during health and hygiene training

Environment and agriculture

Reforestation - *WithOneSeed*

The WithOneSeed reforestation program in Tilomar sub-district commenced early in 2019 with many activities and great progress this year. WithOneSeed (WoS) is a certified carbon forestry program in Timor-Leste, working with subsistence farming communities to replant deforested land and to generate income for farmers. Farmers are paid to plant and maintain trees and once the trees are established and gold standard certification has been confirmed, income will be generated through the sale of carbon social credits.

Funding for the WoS program, including staffing and extensive training, has been provided by FoSC donations, Oxfam and Xpand Foundation.

This year, more than 10,000 seedlings were propagated locally in a village-based nursery, built specifically for the WoS program.

Master Tree Growers Training

An important part of the success of the program is the delivery of practical agroforestry and permaculture training and to develop the capacity of communities to replant and maintain their forests. In September 2019, 32 farmers participated in a four-day Master Tree Grower program. Building on local knowledge, farmers shared information and received training and information on seed selection, tree planting and maintenance.



Master Tree Growers training participants in Lalawa

Tree distribution

Tree distribution, planting and the public launching of the WoS program were postponed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and restrictions on travel and public gatherings. Distribution of trees commenced on 31 March and was completed by mid-June. There were 10,000 small trees (9,250 mahogany and 750 sandalwood) distributed to 37 families in four sub-villages in Lalawa sub-district. WoS staff will continue to regularly monitor their growth and engage with farmers.

Plans are underway to continue GPS land mapping of new areas to involve in the program and to meet the requirements for certification of the WoS program.

FoSC is committed to supporting the establishment of this fantastic initiative as it will have a significant environmental and economic impact in the communities in Tilomar sub-district.



10,000 seedlings were grown in the WithOneSeed nursery and distributed to farmers

Agriculture programs

The CCC deliver the 'Haforsa' (Strengthening Community Livelihoods) program in four villages in four sub-districts in Covalima. This program is funded by Oxfam, and this year has expanded to involve 18 farmer groups (with approximately 315 direct beneficiaries) and aims to help rural communities to increase their food security and income. Activities include training in food production, crop diversification, livestock practices, water and land conservation, horticulture and agriculture. Staff also provide training on small scale business and work to connect communities to local markets to increase their income.

The Haforsa team also support the implementation of the 'Romansa' (Saving for Change) program in which groups accumulate their savings and approve small loans to each other from their pooled savings. Groups receive training to set up the program as well as ongoing training and mentoring on financial and organisational management. Saving for Change has been implemented in 16 groups in seven villages in Covalima. The groups have been very successful, and report that the majority of loans are used to support young people with education and to establish small businesses.



Communities receive training on food production to increase food security and income

Disaster risk reduction

There are two programs at the CCC that are focussed on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR); the Oxfam funded Australian Humanitarian Program (AHP) and a similar program funded by an international NGO called Give2Asia. The programs work in different target areas but with similar activities, focussed on disaster preparedness, resilience building and training for communities on risk preparation, response and inclusive practices.

The staff involved in these programs were also involved in establishing a national association for DRR and actively participate in this network to share challenges and achievements.



Planting trees is an activity in the Disaster Risk Reduction program at the CCC

Empowering women

A key focus area in the CCC Strategic Plan is to contribute to the empowerment of women. For many years, the CCC has implemented the Rural Women's Development Program (RWDP) with funding and support from the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA).

Through the RWDP, nine women's groups were established, involving more than 110 women. The groups work together on activities including horticulture, food production, weaving tais and handicrafts. These income generating activities allow the women to support their families' needs, including children's education. The groups share their skills and knowledge and participate in training at quarterly forums at the CCC.

Supporting access to market opportunities is a key activity and the RWDP team has helped groups to promote their activities and products through social media, events, brochures and training.

The partnership with IWDA has expanded to include implementation of a Women's Leadership program so that women can be active participants in village councils. More than 50 women have participated in training called 'Good Decisions, Good Leadership' to develop their confidence and skills in leadership, facilitation, public speaking, conflict resolution and models of decision making. A further objective is to ensure that women understand gender equality and referral pathways for victims of domestic violence.



Women in the Rural Women's Development Program sell handicrafts, including bags made from recycled plastic



More than 50 women have completed leadership training at the CCC

Events

An important focus of the work of the RWDP and the CCC is the involvement of women in internationally recognised commemorative events. These events provide an opportunity for women to speak publicly and are attended by many people including community leaders, local authorities, NGOs and local and national media. Three examples of such events are described here.

On 24 October, 107 people participated in an event in Fohorem sub-district to commemorate the International Day of Rural Women. Guest speakers spoke about participation of women in the National Plan for Suco Development (PNDS), gender-based violence and referral processes.

An event was held in Suai on 26 November to commemorate International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, with more than 200 attendees. There was a demonstration of town cleaning on the main road and public places, an animation of first aid training, and information provided on health & hygiene and gender-based violence. A focus of the event was to promote gender equality in decision making and awareness of gender-based violence.

More than 280 people attended an event on 18 March to commemorate International Women's Day. Activities included a quiz and theatre performance on gender equality, women's leadership and eliminating discrimination against women.

Solar lighting projects

Third Village Lighting Scheme installed

In November 2019 a third Village Lighting Scheme (VLS) was implemented, bringing solar lighting to 48 homes in the remote off-grid sub-village of Nanu in Fatumean sub-district.

The CCC team has played an important role in engaging with the community before and after installation and has helped the community to establish a maintenance fund and hold regular meetings to ensure that the solar systems continue to operate effectively.

There are now 127 households in Covalima that have received solar lighting as part of the VLS project which has been initiated and funded by Renew, including donations from FoSC.

The installation of solar panels provides lighting in the evening and removes the need to purchase and use kerosene, bringing social, economic and health benefits to families.



Local technicians are trained to maintain and repair the VLS equipment



A small solar panel has been installed on this house roof as part of the VLS program in Halik Nai

Land rights and advocacy

The CCC is a member of Rede Covalima; a network of local NGOs undertaking a range of advocacy work in Covalima. The network includes 11 member organisations, who meet quarterly and involve local government ministries and services in their meetings and training. The Covalima Network plays an essential advocacy role in supporting communities through information sharing, facilitation, mediation and mobilising them to take action.

The network's main activity is to support communities impacted by infrastructure projects, with issues relating to land acquisitions and lack of community consultation. They also focus on settling land disputes between families, government & contractors, community & government.

The network has a partnership agreement with Oxfam to do this work, and the funded program is called Land Inclusive Development (LID). Located at the CCC, the LID program operates as a CCC program, with three LID staff working as part of the team.

This year, the LID team dealt with 33 cases, of which 24 have been resolved and nine are still underway. Their methods include mediation, facilitation of meetings and accompaniment for legal processes.

LID staff and network members continue to monitor the impacts of the infrastructure project and have also been working with communities that may be impacted by Timor Resources plans for onshore oil drilling. Timor Resources has held community meetings in four villages and LID staff attend these meetings to ensure communities are getting the information that they need and to make them aware that the network can assist them if there are any concerns.

CCC partnerships and networks

The CCC has developed strong local, national and international networks, with regular meetings involving NGOs, civil service organisations, government, education providers and communities. This has resulted in stronger collaboration and better outcomes for communities.

District Taskforces – Disaster response

In 2020, the CCC has been invited to join two taskforces created by the District Administration.

The District COVID-19 Taskforce met weekly during the State of Emergency to discuss plans to share information with communities to prevent the transmission of Coronavirus. The taskforce included district government members, local authorities and NGOs. The CCC activities as part of the taskforce have been described earlier in this report.

The CCC has also been invited to join the District Disaster Management Committee, in the area of Prevention, Preparation and Mitigation. This is in recognition of their programs that support Disaster Risk Reduction activities. As part of the taskforce, they are involved in rapid assessments for disasters, including the emergency response after flash flooding events that occurred in Covalima.



WHO posters have been distributed to 125 villages in Covalima district

CCC staff development

The CCC and program partners including FoSC, Oxfam and IWDA continue to look for opportunities to strengthen skills and capacity for the staff, Commission members and volunteers. The team participated in many training activities and workshops offered throughout the year. Although the staff development training is often program specific, it is common practice for all staff to be invited to attend, or for resources and training to be shared with colleagues. Examples of sharing information from training and development programs are included here.

Leadership training

Hilaria, the RWDP Program Coordinator, utilised resources from the RWDP women's leadership program to provide training on leadership and good governance for four senior staff at the CCC.

Health and hygiene training at CCC

Gaudencio, the Health Program Coordinator, facilitated a health and hygiene training program for 21 CCC staff. The presentation included information on hygienic practices, preventing diarrhea and malaria. The staff created a policy for the CCC to be a role model to the community. Their 'Environment policy' includes information on general cleaning, rubbish removal, water usage and designated 'no smoking' areas.



The team has implemented a policy to keep the CCC clean and be a role model to the community

Gender Action Learning

In February, four senior CCC staff attended an Oxfam-funded training program in Dili about Gender Action Learning System (GALS). GALS is a community-led empowerment methodology which can be used to change attitudes towards gender equality at an individual, community and organisational level. The information from the workshop was shared with all staff and they are looking at ways to incorporate gender equality and inclusion across all programs.

CCC program staff also participated in training in the following areas:

- Child protection
- Proposal writing
- Program management
- Disability inclusion
- Employment of women and safe working conditions
- Advocacy
- Sustainable development and climate change
- COVID-19 prevention



CCC staff participated in Gender Action Learning training in Dili and shared information with the whole team

Strategic Goal 2:

Practise good governance and management in our friendship

The CCC is a registered association with the Ministry of Justice and became a registered NGO in 2013. It is governed by an active and engaged Commission who meet regularly to oversee the CCC programs and activities. The current Commission, comprised of three women and six men, includes village leaders and skilled professionals from government ministries, advocacy groups and the Women's Association. The Commission President is Amelia de Jesus Amaral, a local policewoman working in the Vulnerable Persons Unit.

There are 33 staff employed at the CCC and volunteers assist in a range of programs. The CCC team is led by the Director Alberto de Jesus Barros, who oversees all program areas and has strong working relationships with all CCC Program Coordinators and partner organisations. The CCC leadership team meet weekly to discuss their work and all-staff meetings are also held regularly. This meeting structure ensures excellent communication and collaboration between programs.

All staff, volunteers and Commission members participate in workshops and training programs to develop their skills and knowledge and have input in areas including leadership, policy development, disability inclusion and planning.

The Director of the CCC and the FoSC Coordinator speak every week and have frequent email correspondence, often involving Program Coordinators. These discussions inform regular Coordinator Reports to the FoSC Community Reference Committee.



CCC Commission members and staff

NGO capacity assessment

The CCC is a member of FONGTIL, the national umbrella membership-based non-government organisation for local, national and international NGOs in Timor-Leste. In August 2019, senior staff at the CCC participated in an NGO capacity assessment facilitated by FONGTIL. The objective was to learn what senior staff understand about the structure, policies, management and processes at the CCC. Feedback was received that Program Coordinators showed maturity, independence and demonstrated a high level of understanding of the Centre's vision, mission, and processes.

CCC financial management

The CCC Finance team is led by Graciano Gusmao, Vice Director at the CCC. The team has clear and transparent systems for record keeping and monitoring program income and expenditure. Records are maintained using Quickbooks and Excel spreadsheets.

The CCC Director and FoSC Coordinator work together to discuss and review budgets for FoSC funded programs. The CCC fulfils the requirements of the City of Port Phillip funding agreement and provides six-monthly acquittals and reporting on all activities. Clear records are also provided on all programs and projects funded by FoSC community donations.

External audits

External audits are conducted for each financial year by Dili-based CC Business Solutions, with funds provided by CCC program partners including FoSC. Two audits were conducted this year, with the 2017-18 audit in October 2019 and 2018-19 audit undertaken in January 2020.

The CCC has received clean audit reports and has acted upon recommendations made by the external auditor. Further training will also be provided next year to assist staff to effectively utilise online Quickbooks.



CCC finance team members Graciano (centre) and Antonietta (right) during the audit

Strategic planning

The work of FoSC has been guided by the FoSC Joint Strategic Plan 2010-2020. This plan has set a solid base for ongoing community development through 20 years of the community-to-community partnership. In 2016 the CCC developed a four-year strategic plan to further articulate the priorities of the FoSC Joint Strategic Plan and consolidate the role of the CCC as a key education and development organisation for the community of Covalima.

Both the FoSC and CCC strategic plans are to be updated in 2020. FoSC started the process of developing a new five-year plan in February, with a draft developed by the end of June to be presented to Council for endorsement. The strategic planning process was facilitated by pro-bono consultant Jan Cossar and involved interviews with key stakeholders and a series of workshops with FoSC Community Reference Committee members.

Once endorsed, the 2020-25 plan will be made public and will guide the work of the FoSC. Later in 2020, the CCC team will commence the process of reviewing and updating their strategic plan.



CCC staff participate in many training programs and workshops along with local partner organisations

Strategic Goal 3 and 4

Build community awareness and involvement in City of Port Phillip

Build our knowledge of friendship between our communities

Suai church massacre commemoration

Friday 6 September 2019 was the 20th anniversary of the Suai Church massacre, which occurred after the results of the independence referendum in 1999 were announced.

FoSC commemorated the anniversary by holding a flag-raising ceremony at the St Kilda Town Hall. The Australian flag was flown at half-mast and the Timorese flag was raised on the community flagpole. A wreath was placed alongside a circle of hand-painted stones, representing all those who lost their lives in the massacre.

More than 30 people attended the event including City of Port Phillip Councillors and staff. It was a moving ceremony, with passionate speakers sharing their very personal and moving stories and words about the importance of our ongoing friendship.



Flag raising ceremony at St Kilda Town Hall

20-year anniversary celebrations

This year marks the 20-year anniversary of the signing of a formal Statement of Friendship with Suai, Covalima. The City of Port Phillip was the first of many local governments to formalise friendships between local communities in Australia and Timor-Leste and many events were planned to celebrate the friendships, at a local and state level. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary to postpone, cancel or modify these events but efforts have been made to acknowledge this important occasion.

Friends of Suai/Covalima commemorative booklet

FoSC produced a commemorative booklet to celebrate the achievements of the 20-year friendship between Port Phillip and Covalima communities.

Stories from the booklet were shared on the FoSC Facebook page and via email during May and June. The booklet is to be launched online and distributed in July 2020. It will also be added to the Port Phillip library collection and a window display was set up in June to promote its availability.



Window display at St Kilda library to launch the 20-year commemorative booklet

Volunteer hours

Many community members support the friendship by sharing their time, knowledge and expertise. This year, FoSC began to collect information on the number of voluntary hours contributed by members and supporters. The total volunteer hours exceeded 1,000 hours, with a further 1,500+ hours for special projects by local academics and artists to document the history and promote the friendship.

The commitment by community volunteers is of vital importance to the success and continuation of the friendship.

Community donations

Over \$46,000 was donated to FoSC this year for programs including scholarships, library resources, the WithOneSeed reforestation program and COVID-19 response activities. Donations are received from individuals, churches, schools, sporting and service organisations in Port Phillip and the wider community.

Many in-kind donations are also received from individuals and organisations. This year FoSC has received many donated books from individuals and the Australian East Timor Association, which will be shipped to Suai for use in the Secondary School library and at the CCC.

FoSC are grateful for all donations and would like to especially acknowledge those donors who generously provide multiple year scholarships for students to complete three years of senior secondary school or university degrees.

Rotary Club of Balwyn has also made a significant long-term commitment to the WithOneSeed reforestation program in Covalima. The Club has made a three-year commitment to fund the establishment and operations of the WithOneSeed nursery, with a contribution of \$15,000 this financial year.



Rotary Club of Balwyn have funded the WithOneSeed nursery, which holds more than 10,000 seedlings

COVID-19 Appeal

The community generously responded to the COVID-19 appeal and funds were raised to buy soap and establish a small Civic Health fund at the CCC to fund ongoing awareness raising and training programs.

Forty boxes (2,880 bars) of soap were purchased through a store in Dili and distributed to communities throughout Covalima district. Further purchases of soap and hand sanitiser may be made in the future depending on needs identified by the CCC.

Basketball court reconstruction

The reconstruction of the basketball court at Suai Secondary school was completed in December 2019. This project was fully funded through FoSC donations and overseen by the staff from the CCC. Major contributions to the project by Albert Park College students and the Port Phillip Basketball Association ensured that the court could be completely resurfaced, including new goal posts, boards and rings.

The Suai Secondary school students are thrilled with the new court and the Principal hopes to host inter-school tournaments in the future, with an invitation extended to all young people in Port Phillip.



Students at Suai Secondary school enjoying a game of basketball on the new court

Fundraising activities and events

FoSC is registered as a fundraiser with Consumer Affairs Victoria and has fulfilled all annual reporting requirements. This year, FoSC raised more than \$6,000 through fundraising events and the sale of Timorese coffee and merchandise. Some fundraising events were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Film Event – The Australian Dream

A fundraising film night was held on 21 August 2019, with a preview screening of the powerful documentary 'The Australian Dream'. More than 100 people attended this event at the Classic Cinema in Elsternwick. The film night was a great success and raised \$1300 for the WithOneSeed carbon reforestation project.

2020 Trivia Night – postponed

The fifth annual trivia night planned for 26 March was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals and local businesses had donated items for the silent auction and these items are being held for future fundraising events. Many ticket holders generously donated their ticket value rather than cancelling, resulting in \$2,022 raised for the scholarship program.

St Kilda library book sales

Each year the St Kilda Library holds book sales, with all proceeds donated to FoSC to support education programs in Covalima district. In December, the library book sale raised \$1,144. Funds will be used to resource the Suai Secondary School library, including the purchase and shipment of books.



Support for decentralisation of government

The City of Port Phillip Mayor and CEO signed a Municipal Cooperation Agreement with the Municipality of Covalima in 2016 and stand ready to support decentralisation of government in Timor-Leste. This government to government agreement focuses on sharing professional experience, advice and mentoring and underpins the intent of the friendship agreement between Port Phillip and Covalima municipalities.

The Friends of Suai/Covalima Coordinator represents the City of Port Phillip at Local Government Timor-Leste Network meetings to share information and to stay informed of the work of other local Councils and the Victorian Government Timor-Leste program.

Decentralisation processes are underway in Timor-Leste and early in 2020, Timor-Leste National Parliament began consultative processes in all districts to discuss proposed laws on decentralisation, local power and municipal elections. A Commission visited Suai in February for a consultation forum which involved more than 60 community members, including the Director of the CCC. Outcomes from the consultations and the proposed Laws have not yet been received.

The FoSC Coordinator's annual monitoring visit to Suai was cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic so there has not been direct communication with the District Administrator in Suai. The CCC however has continued to strengthen its relationship with the District Administration during the COVID-19 pandemic and has played an integral role in their COVID-19 taskforce.

This link between the CCC and District Administration will help to ensure good communication between Port Phillip and Covalima local governments in the future as decentralisation processes continue to be implemented.





Financial report

Friends of Suai/Covalima Income & Expenditure - 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

INCOME		
City of Port Phillip funds	86,314	*
Individual donations and grants	46,335	
Film night fundraiser	2,209	
Trivia night fundraiser	2,022	
Coffee & merchandise sales	1,750	
St Kilda library book sales	1,144	
Bank interest	231	
Total Income	\$ 140,005	
EXPENDITURE		
CCC core grant	48,000	*
Scholarships	38,292	
WithOneSeed reforestation	15,000	
20th anniversary celebrations	12,580	*
Basketball court	12,500	
Teacher/Library project	9,858	#
CCC audit support	6,785	*
CCC training support	5,622	*
Meetings and catering	3,894	*
COVID-19 response	3,575	#
Administration	3,021	*
Monitoring visit / Travel	1,260	*
Coffee & merchandise	1,087	#
Fundraising events	975	#
Total Expenditure	\$ 162,449	

* City of Port Phillip funding

Combined CoPP funding and donations

Friends of Suai/Covalima Donations account - 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

Opening balance 1/7/2019	\$ 60,041
Plus income	53,691
Less expenditure	76,135
Closing balance 30/6/2020	\$ 37,597